

From: Peter Schultz
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/28/02 3:38pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Hello,

The current status of the Microsoft anti-trust case scares me.

When I first got into computers it was 1995 and I thought Windows 95 would be the way to go. The price was better than Apple Macintosh and the whole platform seemed better for programmers. After a short time I became frustrated by the stability of Windows so I began searching for a better alternative.

Then fortune struck! It was late 1996 and I was looking through a Macintosh related magazine when I came across an article about the BeBox by Be, Incorporated. This brand new and highly innovative computer had dual processors and ran the Be operating system, all of which was engineered from the ground up to be modern, or as they called it, a system for the next millennium. I hopped on the Internet right away and looked into buying one of these BeBoxes and found to my surprise that I could get one for a very good price. This system made me happy because I never had any mysterious system problems that required me to waste my time reinstalling as I had done many times with Windows.

Soon thereafter BeOS was up and running on Intel compatible computers and being a total computer geek I had always wanted a laptop computer. So in 1998 I purchased a Dell Inspiron 3000, which I had figured would be able to run BeOS. I was right, Be had the resources to make this possible and I was able to stay current with their latest developments.

There is an alternate side to this Dell computer. It was purchased only weeks before Windows 98 was released yet I did not get any credit for the purchase and was given an ugly hacked version of Windows 95 that made it look like Windows 98. Here's another reason I'm very upset by Microsoft. To my absolute horror this unstable factory installation only lasted about a week before I had to do a clean install of Windows! You'll note that this is the one of the disputed factors in the antitrust case, the tying in of Internet Explorer to Windows 95 is not only a questionable business practice, but it made my brand new very expensive computer a pile of junk.

I called Dell about this and since it was a software problem they brushed it off. I then called Microsoft and before I even talked to an actual person I was informed that I would have to pay them money to even talk to anyone! I instantly hung up the phone and felt angry, sad, and helpless to this ugly situation. I thought to myself, "why after having spent over \$3000 am I being treated this way?" It was at this time that I decided I did not agree with the Microsoft End User License Agreement and called Dell back to see about getting compensation for this. Dell told me it would not be possible.

I eventually brushed it off because I was primarily a BeOS user and had great hope that Be would be able to continue developing their amazing OS. Unfortunately, Microsoft's stranglehold made it nearly impossible for BeOS to be installed on factory systems and now the result is that for all anyone knows, BeOS will never be updated again! Palm, Inc. has recently purchased the technology and there may be a chance that the public will see another version, but there's just no way to tell.

Microsoft has steadily moved from shrewd business to leveraging everyone into doing what they want. As a computer science student and a part-time consultant I deal with Microsoft in some way

everyday. This is not by choice! If I were to attempt to discontinue the use and/or support of Microsoft products I would be putting myself into obscurity. It might be a case where I won't be able to view important documents that are only readable by the latest version of Microsoft Office, or it might be that a web page is only designed to be viewed in Microsoft Internet Explorer. Ask any Macintosh user what would happen if these applications were not available for their platform.

Microsoft is a massive corporation that has gone beyond mere profit and has long been in the business of screwing people over. Even as they have been on trial for being a monopoly they have been making their position stronger. They recently purchased Great Plains Software here in Fargo, North Dakota, and I'm sure it won't take long before they're dominating the small business software market.

As a user who depends on computers for my livelihood I feel depressed about this, and I know that I'm not alone. This American company is making people across the entire planet feel as I do, please do something soon so that at the very least we can enjoy a good variety of platforms. My hope is that your decision will be such that Palm sees opportunity with BeOS and that other small truly innovative companies also see openings thereby giving users like me a choice. As for today the future of computing is gloomy, grayed over by the drab blanket that is Microsoft.

Without your intervention I see absolutely no hope for small truly innovative companies like Be. Do not simply settle for handing power off to Apple; give it all back to the people. I want Microsoft to hurt as badly as they've hurt me.

Sincerely,
Peter Schultz
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